



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Agenda Item 4d

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Memorandum

TO: Legislation Committee

DATE: March 7, 2014

FR: Executive Director

W. I. 1131

RE: AB 2173 (Bradford): Low Speed Electric Bicycle

Background

Assembly Bill 2173 (Bradford) expands the definition of a motorized bicycle to create a new classification — a “low-speed electric bicycle”— which would be granted new access to Class I bicycle paths, consistent with MTC’s 2014 Advocacy Program (see Goal #6). A low-speed electric bicycle is distinguished from a motorized bicycle by the following characteristics:

- It has fully operable pedals capable of propelling the bicycle without a motor
- It weighs no more than 80 lbs
- It has a lower maximum power output 750 watts (vs. 1000)
- It has a maximum speed of 20 miles/hour when traveling on a paved level surface when powered solely by the motor by a person weighing 170 lbs.

Recommendation: Support and Seek Amendment

Discussion:

AB 2173 would grant riders of electric-assist and other electric bicycles access to a network of bicycle paths they are currently prohibited from using unless a local jurisdiction adopts an ordinance explicitly allowing them. A number of jurisdictions in Northern California have allowed electric bicycles on paths for many years, including Petaluma, Sebastopol, UC Berkeley and UC Davis. The definition proposed in the bill is consistent with the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission classification (16 C.F.R. 1512.1, et seq.). While this definition is considered somewhat outdated in the growing electric bicycle industry, it is a reasonable basis for broadening access, while at the same time maintaining restrictions against use of Class I paths by higher-speed electric bicycles which could cause significant injury to pedestrians or other users. To continue current law’s policy of allowing local jurisdictions ultimate control over trail access, we recommend an amendment to clarify that local jurisdictions may still exclude low-speed electric bicycles from Class I paths as long as they post signs at trail access points.

Support: California Electric Bicycle Association

Oppose: None on file



Steve Heminger

RL: SH

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